Babies and young children need to form a secure attachment to key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy, and eager to participate and learn.

The key person role

- A key person builds an on-going relationship with the child and his/her parents and is committed to that child's well-being while in the setting.

- Every child that attends is allocated a key person before they begin settling in.

- The key person conducts the progress check at age two for their key children.

- The role is fully explained to parents on induction and the name of the child's key person is recorded.

- The key person is central to settling a child into the setting. The key person explain the need for a settling in process and agree a plan with the parents.

- Shift patterns and staff absence can affect a child who is just settling in; where possible, settling in should be matched to when the key person is on duty.

- The number of children for each key person takes into account the individual needs of children and the capacity of the key person to manage their cohort; it is also influenced by part-time places and part time staff. The setting manager should aim for consistency i.e. matching part-time staff to part-time children; full-time children should not be divided between key persons during the week.

- The key person spends time daily with his or her key group to ensure their well-being.

Parents

- Key persons are the first point of contact for parents with regard to matters concerning their child and any concerns parents may have are addressed with the key person in the first instance.

- Key persons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.

- The key person is responsible for the child's developmental records, completing the progress check at age two, and for sharing information about progress with the child's parents.

Learning and development

- The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is achieved through regular observation and assessment of children, using information gathered about their achievements, interests and learning styles to plan for each individual child's learning and development.

- If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the key person must discuss this with the setting manager or SENCO and the child's parents.

Back-up for the key person

- When the main key person is absent or unavailable to provide a stable and consistent care relationship for the child, other room staff need to be able to step in.

- All staff are encouraged to build good bonds with each child in their room not just their key children if this does not negatively impact a child's attachment with the key person.

- All staff should form a relationship with each child so that each child is happy to be cared for by them.

- The back-up staff shares information with parents in the key person's absence and makes notes in the child's records where appropriate.

- The back-up staff ensures information is shared with the key person.

Safeguarding children

- The key person has a responsibility towards their key children to report any concern about their development, welfare or child protection matter to the Nursery Manager/SENCo and to follow the procedures in this respect.

- Regular supervision with the Nursery Manager provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.